



About the *What's the Rush?* campaign

On Sept. 9, the Tennessee District Attorneys General Conference launched *What's the Rush?*, a campaign to educate teens about the difficulties of being a teen parent. The goal of *What's the Rush?* is to raise awareness about the legal, financial and social consequences of becoming a teen parent.

The district attorneys will be visiting schools and civic organizations across the state to spread the campaign's message. A *What's the Rush?* video and printed materials show the reality of teen parenting using the stories of real Tennessee teen parents.

Tennessee's district attorneys continue to see an alarming number of child support cases involving teen parents in courts throughout the state. Consider the following:

- More than 13,000 teen girls become pregnant each year in Tennessee. (Tennessee Department Of Health, Office Of Policy, Planning And Assessment, 2006)
- The state of Tennessee requires all fathers, even teenage dads, to pay child support to the primary caretaker of their child or children. Not having a job is not an excuse. If fathers don't pay court-ordered child support payments, they are at risk of losing their driver's license and going to jail.
- For teenage mothers, child support payments alone are not enough. The financial responsibilities of parenting are tremendous. The cost of raising a child from birth to 17 years old is estimated to be \$197,790. (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- Statistics show teen parents have significantly lower high school and college graduation rates, a 10 percent to 15 percent decrease in income and a higher likelihood of living in poverty. (www.thenationalcampaign.org)
- Eight out of 10 teen fathers don't marry the mother of their first child. (www.stayteen.org)
- Teen fathers have less education and earn much less money than teenage boys without children. (www.thenationalcampaign.org)
- Statistically, children of teen parents are more likely to be abused or neglected, have lower test scores and are more likely to spend time in jail. (www.thenationalcampaign.org)
- The children of teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and at a low birth weight, which can cause serious medical problems, including infant death. (www.thenationalcampaign.org)